

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, GR, US

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CARAMANLIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON DISCUSSED WIDELY
IN GREEK PRESS

PLEASE PASS TO WHITE HOUSE

REF: ATHENS 1437

1. GREEK PRESS MARCH 3 AFFORDED WIDE COVERAGE TO REPORTS THAT PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS MIGHT VISIT WASHINGTON THIS SUMMER. KATHIMERINI (INDEPENDENT, PRO-GOVERNMENT) CARRIED REPORT ON THE FRONT PAGE AS A LEAD STORY UNDER THE HEADLINE "STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SPOKE OF GOOD PROSPECTS FOR POSSIBLE VISIT OF CARAMANLIS THIS JULY TO WASHINGTON." AFTERNOON NEWSPAPER ESTIA (ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE) SAME DAY CARRIED HALF PAGE, ONE COLUMN ARTICLE ON SAME THEME. FOUR OTHER AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS CARRIED SMALLER REPORTS.

2. ALL PAPERS RELATE POSSIBLE CARAMANLIS VISIT WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF INVITATIONS REPORTEDLY EXTENDED BY USG TO 135 WORLD LEADERS IN CONNECTION WITH SPECIAL
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CELEBRATORY EVENTS MARKING OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR. IN

NO PRESS ACCOUNTS, TO DATE, HAVE ANY STRANDS OF CRITICISM BEEN INJECTED RELEVANT TO THE PM'S POSSIBLE VISIT. ALL ACCOUNTS EVIDENTLY UTILIZED AS THEIR SOURCE A STORY PUBLISHED IN VRADYNI (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) THE PREVIOUS DAY (MARCH 2) FROM ITS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT GEORGE DEMOPOULOS, WHICH REPORTED THAT A SIX-HOUR MEETING HAD BEEN HELD RECENTLY IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AND WELL-KNOWN GREEK-AMERICAN PROFESSORS WHO HAD OPPOSED THE PRIOR MILITARY REGIME HERE. THAT REPORT CONCLUDED BY ASSERTING THAT A STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE CLOSE OF THE MEETING OBSERVED TO THE CORRESPONDENT THAT THERE ARE "GOOD PROSPECTS" FOR A VISIT OF THE GREEK PRIME MINISTER TO THE U.S. THIS SUMMER.

3. THE KATHIMERINI ACCOUNT--BY FAR THE MOST PROMINENT--COMMENTED IN ITS TEXT THAT IT IS PRESUMED THAT MINISTER

CARAMANLIS WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO PARTICIPATING IN SUCH A CONVOCAION OF WORLD LEADERS IN WASHINGTON (SHOULD THIS EVENT BE REALIZED) BECAUSE (A) IT WOULD GIVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH CHIEFS OF STATE AND PRIME MINISTERS WITH A VIEW TOWARD PROMOTING LARGER GREEK INTERESTS; AND (B) IT WOULD IN ANY EVENT BE DIFFICULT TO REFUSE SUCH AN INVITATION IF ALL OTHER LEADERS ACCEPTED, ESPECIALLY SO SINCE "SOUNDINGS" HAVE OCCURED IN THE PAST FOR A VISIT TO WASHINTON--TO WHICH THERE HAS BEEN NO FOLLOW-UP. KATHIMERINI NOTES AS WELL THAT THE VISIT WOULD GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CARAMANLIS FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER, BOTH OF WHOM HE HAS MET PREVIOUSLY IN BRUSSELS AND HELSINKI. ACCORDINGLY, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN THIS NEW MEETING FOR PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN A VERY REALISTIC MANNER WITH THE AIM OF EVOKING AMERICAN SOLUTIONS. FINALLY, KATHIMERINI SUGGESTS THAT ANOTHER SUBSTANTIVE SIDE TO SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE THE UNDERLINING OF THE BONDS BETWEEN GREECE AND GREEK-AMERICANS--WHO WOULD CERTAINLY NOT LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME THE PRIME MINISTER IN A VERY IMPRESSIVE MANNER. THE ARTICLE NOTES THAT GREEK-AMERICANS EXERCISE AN INFLUENCE ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF AMERICAN POLICY, AS WELL AS ON THE RESULTS OF THE COMING ELECTION.

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ACCORDINGLY, THE RECEPTION WHICH THE GREEK-AMERICANS WOULD GIVE TO MR. CARAMANLIS COULD STRENGTHEN HIS NEGOTIATING POSITION IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

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